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SUBJECT: CWC: DISCUSSION WITH GENERAL KHOLSTOV ON STATUS
OF RUSSIAN DESTRUCTION PROGRAM AND REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

REF: MOSCOW 291222Z JUL 09

Classified By: Janet E. Beik for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

This is CWC-72-09.

SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

11. (SBU) The 14th Session of the Conference of States Parties was held at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague from November 30 through December 4. On November 30, Victor Ivanovich Kholstov, serving as Head of the Russian Delegation, delivered the National Statement on behalf of the Russian Federation. He informed the Conference that Russia had very recently met its forty-five percent destruction target ahead of schedule and he expressed gratitude to the international donor community for their contributions, noting specifically the United States Government and the Nuclear Threat Initiative. (Reftel)

12. (SBU) Immediately following the delivery of the Russian National Statement, Kholstov met privately with Andrew Weber, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Chemical and Biological Defense Programs. The conversation focused on three main topics: Russian perception of the U.S. chemical demilitarization program and its inability to meet the 2012 deadline; a Russian request for assistance at Kizner; and possible U.S.-Russian cooperation on chemical and biological defense. Russian participants included Elena Rodyushkina (Ministry of Trade), Konstantin Gavrilov (Russian Delegation to the OPCW), and Vladimir Ladanov (Russian Delegation to the OPCW). U.S. participants included Col Craig Campbell (ATSD Military Assistant), Sarah Rodjom (OSD Policy), Lynn Hoggins (DTRA), and Jennifer Smith (U.S. Delegation to the OPCW). Translation for General Kholstov was done informally by Vladimir Ladanov.

CHEMICAL DEMILITARIZATION AND THE 2012 DEADLINE

13. (SBU) Weber opened the discussion by inviting

Kholstov to Washington and to the U.S. chemical demilitarization sites to discuss issues of mutual interest. Weber informed Kholstov that he also extended an invitation to the incoming OPCW Director- General, Ahmet Uzumcu. Weber said that the United States and Russia have a shared interest in addressing the Chemical Weapons Convention destruction deadline. He said that he knows that Russia is still trying to meet the 2012 deadline, but offered that there is no shame in missing it given Russia,s strong commitment and effort.

¶4. (C) Weber asked Kholstov hypothetically what Russia would do if they were not going to meet the deadline and what their diplomatic strategy would be. Kholstov did not answer the question directly. Instead he stated that he recognizes that the new Administration is doing its utmost to fulfill its Chemical Weapons Convention obligations and that Russia has not been critical of the U.S. program (a point he reiterated several times). He then went on to say that Russia has not fully evaluated how it would handle missing the deadline, but that they would likely look at the U.S. approach and how it has progressed since 2006. He recounted the U.S. progress to date and how original projections have been surpassed.
Qbeen surpassed.

¶5. (C) Weber closed this topic by thanking Russia for not openly criticizing the U.S. program and for their recent support at the IAEA on the Iranian resolution. He briefly commented on Iran and a small but noisy group that is critical of the U.S.

program. He then turned to the assistance request.

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL DEMILITARIZATION ASSISTANCE

¶6. (C) Kholstov summarized the recent Russian request for U.S. assistance at Kizner, as well as a meeting he had with other U.S. Defense officials in early November. He stressed the importance of continued cooperation at Shchuch,ye and thanked Weber for his involvement at Novocheboksarsk. Kholstov stated that the assistance would be used to purchase equipment at Kizner to supplement the equipment provided by Canada and added that the amount needed is less than what the U.S. provided at other Russian sites. He said that in early November he provided details on the amount of funds needed, but was not given a definitive (yes or no) answer on continued U.S. assistance. He further added that he needs an answer from the United States soon so that Russia can move forward with plans for Kizner.

¶7. (C) Weber said that there are still internal discussions underway in the United States. Weber made a number of recommendations to General Kholstov to help facilitate a USG decision.

¶8. (C) Weber recommended that Kholstov provide written clarification on the assistance requested and prioritize the request. Weber added that candid clarity on Russia,s budget situation would be useful for decision makers. Weber proffered that Kholstov could use his experience at Shchuch,ye to determine what U.S. assistance would be most useful at Kizner, but added that it is unlikely that the U.S. will be able to commit to that level of assistance at Kizner. (Weber reinforced this point several times.)

¶9. (C) Weber recommended that the written request be sent to OSD Policy, but stated that it could

also be sent to him and he can ensure that the appropriate offices receive it. Additionally, he recommended that Russia broach this subject more broadly within the USG since the final decision will come from the interagency. He suggested sending a request to the NSC (Gary Samore) and the State Department (Rose Gottemoeller).

¶10. (C) Weber encouraged Kholstov to consult with Congress, similar to the U.S. consultations with the Duma, to discuss the potential problems with the ceiling levels for funding.

¶11. (C) Weber also informed Kholstov that the United States is internally reviewing the entire U.S.-Russia relationship to determine how and what level of cooperation should be conducted in the future. Weber added that he would like to see the review done by the end of the calendar year.

¶12. (C) Kholstov moved the discussion towards money provided to Russia to date. Kholstov said that it is misleading for the United States to give a dollar amount in presentations because not all of that money went to Russia, but rather covered overhead costs and other contracting expenses. Kholstov said that his government has asked where the \$1 billion is being spent. Weber offered to provide a cost breakout so that Kholstov can show his government where exactly the funds have been allocated. Kholstov thanked Weber and added that this will help answer questions on historical expenditures. Weber concluded discussion of this topic by urging Kholstov to send a written letter on assistance to Kizner as soon as possible so that it can impact the ongoing, internal USG decisions on the U.S.-Russia relationship.

U.S. - RUSSIA COOPERATION ON CHEM-BIO DEFENSE

¶13. (C) Weber continued the discussion of US-Russia cooperation by asking Kholstov how the two countries could cooperate in the areas of protection and medical countermeasures against chem-bio threats. Weber acknowledged that although this does not fall under Kholstov's current portfolio, Kholstov did work this issue previously. Kholstov said that the best way forward for cooperation on this subject would be an intergovernmental (bilateral) agreement. He said that such cooperation was mentioned in November 2001, but that there has been no progress since then. He said he thought the problem was on the U.S. side. Weber then asked what such a framework could be titled. Kholstov said that the title would be dependent on the subject, such as test and evaluation or manufacturing, but that any framework could start with an intergovernmental agreement. Weber concluded by saying that in July the U.S. and Russian Health Ministries signed a bilateral cooperative agreement. He added that the U.S. Health and Human Services department is playing a bigger role in research and development on medical countermeasures for chem-bio threats but that the Department of Defense still has the largest role to play in this endeavor. After a few summary remarks from both sides, the meeting concluded.

¶14. (U) Beik sends.
LEVIN